

The McGill Daily

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Language departments to merge

STUDENTS NOT CONSULTED

By Brenda Mercer

Students and other groups are still scrambling to make their voices heard on Principal Shapiro's proposed changes to McGill's structure, but some aspects of the transition are already underway.

In "Towards a New McGill," Shapiro laid out his vision of a reorganised and scaled-down university, though he admitted that it was only "a rough sketch in need [of] substantial analysis and refinement."

Nevertheless, a project is already underway which would merge McGill's individual language departments, and the Continuing Education language programs, into a "Centre for the Teaching of Modern Languages."

Not surprisingly, the project has raised concerns among students and faculty, particularly regarding the effects of such a merger and the means of its implementation.

APPLY RUBBER STAMP HERE

A "Language Instruction at McGill" workgroup, commissioned by VP Academic Bill Chan, has been examining the proposal since last fall.

Chan mandated the workgroup to "examine and recommend the creation of a University-wide centre for language instruction and learning." He also asked its three members to re-evaluate the support presently given to language programs, and the status of McGill's language instructors.

But members of the East Asian Studies Society questioned the haste with which the workgroup was struck — and its ability to carry out such a contradictory mandate. They sent a petition to the workgroup's chair, Associate Dean of Science Nicolas de Takacsy.

"We question the committee's ability to properly 'exam-

ine' the implications of a 'university wide centre for language' when they are requested at the same time to 'recommend' its creation," the petition states.

"It sounded as if the decision had already been made, and there was no intention to talk to students evident in the mandate," said Elizabeth Herman, an author of the petition.

Lisa Grushcow, vp university affairs of the Students' Society, also expressed concern over the lack of student input into the project's development.

These days, she commented, "there are ad hoc task forces all over the place, some with student representation, some without." When the University is con-

solidating departments, "[it is] fairly obvious that there should be student input," she added.

Representatives of MACES,

the McGill Association of Continuing Education Students, said they had not even been consulted about the proposed changes.

"We don't know anything about that," one said. "I guess we know now."

BUDGET CUTS NOT FAR BEHIND

The three-member workgroup delivered its report to the VP Academic in late January. While the report will not be made available until Chan has met with the deans of the affected faculties, it appears that the project is ready to be implemented.

Maria Predelli, Chair of the Department of Italian, said that although the details of the plan are still up in the air, at this time "there is no choice but to go



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TAs vote to strike

by Henna Bawany

The Association of Graduate Students Employed at McGill (AGSEM) gave resounding approval Feb. 8 to a one day strike to back its demands.

TAs at McGill have been without a contract for 21 months. The union called for a government conciliator last spring, and is now, preparing to go on strike. Members of the TA union voted 125 to 67 in favour of a strike.

The AGSEM's bargaining committee will continue to meet with the administration's representatives. If the negotiations proceed smoothly, the union may withhold strike action. The bargaining committee stressed the mandate to strike would give them necessary leverage, and an actual strike would be used only as a last resort.

The negotiations affect all TAs, including lab demonstrators, marker-graders, and language and music course instructors.

The meeting on February 8 addressed the anxieties of over 200 TAs

who are dissatisfied with their present salaries.

Hugh Potter, president of AGSEM, sat among a panel of six graduate students to answer the questions and queries forwarded by the agitated TA audience.

The six representatives started off with a brief summary of the history of McGill's TA movement, pointing out to members the importance of standing up to unfair treatment by the McGill administration.

In 1976, after an eight day strike by TAs, the university agreed to a series of demands which included indexation of all salaries "according to the cost of living in a manner comparable to other full time staff."

It took McGill four years to honour the agreement, and the AGSEM alleges the university has since ignored it. According to AGSEM, TA wages have not kept pace with inflation since the mid 1980s, causing a massive rollback in real wages.

The six TA union representatives at the meeting expressed their desire to see a response from McGill which

has yet to react to the TAs May 1994 proposals.

They said if pressure does not mount now, McGill's stalling tactics would likely continue until September 1997.

Jacques Sztuke of the McGill administration's negotiation committee, denies talks are being stalled. "We have already scheduled a full agenda of negotiation meetings with the Union, in the presence of the conciliator, between now and the end of March 1996."

Contrary to Sztuke's position, the AGSEM feels that March will be too late. By exam time, they argue, mobilising TAs will be difficult, followed by the summer break when many students will be away.

BROAD CONCERNS

Some of the TAs in the audience called for a government-appointed arbitrator. However, a number of reasons were given to avoid this approach — one being that arbitration typically takes two years, by which time many TAs will have graduated. Others ar-

gued that arbitration is expensive, and the university may not agree to the foot the bill.

An overall picture of the faculties reveals that while some fields attract external investments—and as a result higher salaries are possible—some departments cannot even afford a minimum funding level. This is especially so in the faculty of Arts, where students must face a student to TA ratio of 85 to 1. TAs also frequently work in excess of 20 hours a week and are paid \$3250 per semester, roughly half the salary of other TAs.

To add to their grievances, TAs claim that their salaries have been cut by the 3.58 per cent vacation pay. They also claim that they receive no considerable benefits such as overtime pay, tuition fee waivers, daycare or leaves of absence.

In addition, the union believes that if students coming to McGill have been promised a job as a TA, this job should be guaranteed for the full duration of their studies.

continued on page 3

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Reminder

Board of Directors
Daily Publications Society

Meeting

Tuesday

February 27

4:30 pm

Room B09/B10

You know who you are.



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TAs contin- ued from the cover

International students find themselves completely dependent on the work provided on campus since they are not eligible for government loans or authorised to work outside the university. Some of these students showed reluctance to participate in the strike, as it would mean foregoing their income.

One Biology TA pointed out that her department was well funded and TAs were treated well. She saw no reason to strike.

Another History TA pointed out that even though she was well treated by her department, she wanted to show solidarity with those less fortunate in some other departments.

"It's important to stand together and present a unified voice for what we think is fair for all of us."

"VOICES OF AFRICAN YOUTH: DRUMBEAT FOR THE FUTURE"

McGill African Students Society hosts First Annual Conference on Africa

by Tafadzwa Kasambira

The commonly projected images of Africa are arresting. Skeletal children staring into the camera with watery porridge trickling out from between weak lips, oceans of drought-stricken land stretching for miles and hordes of starving ghosts stretching in lines just as far. Can there be any solution for calamities which are this extreme?

Although the problems are numerous, Africa is increasingly undergoing economic advancements. Essential components of this development process are African students who study abroad, as they take back with them learned expertise and initiative.

The importance of this prospect led to the formation of the McGill African Students Society (MASS) in 1993. The club aims to promote awareness on campus of the culture and issues pertaining to Africa.

As part of our attempt to analyse some of the concrete barriers which hinder development in Africa, MASS has decided to host, in conjunction with the Concordia African Students Society, the First Annual Conference

on Africa from March 15-17, 1996. The theme of the conference is "Voices of African Youth — The Drumbeat for the Future" and African students from across North America are expected to attend.

The conference will begin with several workshops on Saturday, March 16, and will focus on topics considered to be critical to Africa's development. The speakers are a diverse group of professionals who are members of university faculties and international bodies. The topics are:

(1) Food Security—Is it Africa's Key to Success? Long droughts can hinder agricultural economies and necessitate importation of food from neighbouring countries.

(2) The role of women in Africa's development process. Women are beginning to play a major role at the corporate level, in addition to their already well-established role in the agricultural aspects of our economies.

(3) It's not just AIDS—Combating curable diseases in Africa. Although AIDS poses the biggest threat

to African people, other diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis are just as prevalent today as they were in the past.

(4) Business and Investment Prospects in Africa. Much interest has been generated internationally following the emergence in the last decade of several new and progressive African governments.

(5) The Importance of Technology in Africa's Quest for Self-sufficiency. African nations seek to import and utilise those technologies from the west which are appropriate to the economic conditions at home.

The workshops will be followed on the evening of March 16 by a Gala Night in which MASS members and African students from invited universities will give performances. The weekend will be rounded off by a closing ceremony the following day.

In the next few weeks registering stations will be set up in the major buildings around campus and interested parties may pay the registration fee at these posts. For more information, contact by e-mail Sam at samwiri@cs.mcgill.ca or Tafadzwa at BHR8@musicb.mcgill.ca.

REMINDER:

All nominations for the position of Daily Culture Editor are due in the Daily office by 17h00 Friday.

All Daily staff are eligible to run.

Elections will be held at the staff meeting at 17h00, Thursday, 29 February 1996.

**Leap on down to the
Daily office...**

letters

Environmentalist Daily Un-tree Huggers?

To the Daily
re: the blank from cover
of the last Thursday Culture
Issue

We've been avid Daily supporters and readers since we got to McGill. We've stood by you guys through thick and thin, referendum after referendum. So if we're criticising you now it's not another attack from some scheming would-be fascists, it's a constructive criticism from people who think you

can do better than this.

We find it ironic that the Daily can talk about environmental issues and logging in B.C. one minute and then turn around and print about 10 000 copies of a blank page ON PURPOSE! See any inconsistency in that?

We usually look forward to Culture covers for, if not political commentary then at least a funny, colourful collage. The blank page with the little 'Space for Rent' sign at the bottom was something our high school paper decided NOT to do five years

ago (and it wouldn't have been funny then either). We don't know what the point was, but the message was loud and clear: the Daily doesn't see any connection between the environmental issues it covers and its own behaviour as a paper.

Even if you guys weren't as adamant about the environment as you are, the cover was still just a waste of valuable space. You are a NEWSPAPER. Weren't there articles you could have printed? Don't you have photographers whose work

could have filled the space?

A newspaper has to be responsible, no matter what its political stripes. It also has to be consistent if it wants to be taken seriously. It's hard enough defending you guys with so many Ralph Klein-Mike Harris types lurking on this campus, but you make it even harder with silly things like this.

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MCGILL PLAYS INTO PQ'S HANDS

Super hospital survives the cuts

By Jacqueline Reis

The ink has not yet dried on the death certificates of seven Montréal hospitals, but the McGill University Hospital Centre will likely get its \$1 billion grant.

The MUHC's four member hospitals — the Royal Victoria, Montréal General, Montréal Children's and Montréal Neurological — have all finalised their commitment to merge their facilities, and build and administer a new super-hospital together.

Whether Montrealers really want to entrust their health care needs to one large, impersonal institution is not yet clear.

What does seem clear, is that if the MUHC plan continues to siphon provincial funding, four more hospitals will close — leaving just one massive, amalgamated institution in their wake.

YOU DON'T NEED A BED DO YOU?

"Ambulatory care" is the catchphrase currently on the lips of government officials and health care administrators from British Columbia to Boston who claim that fewer hospital beds — and perhaps institutions — are required to serve today's population.

"Anywhere between 18 and 48 per cent of

patients admitted to hospitals don't need to be there," stated Nicholas Steinmetz, associate director of the MUHC in charge of planning, at a recent talk at McGill. He went on to note that Québec will have 275 hospital beds per 100 000 people after Health Minister Jean Rochon's cut-backs are completed, while the U.S. averages 111 beds per 100 000.

"We can save billions of dollars," Steinmetz concluded.

"The impetus is from the various governments," said Maryann Farkas, a doctoral student at Concordia University who is researching the

hospitalisation insurance.

"It's a question of ways that the hospitals are dealing with reduced funding, because it's much cheaper to have a patient out of the hospital," Farkas continued.

But MUHC representatives, such as Dr. Abraham Fuks, dean of McGill's Faculty of Medicine, insist that the proposed merger is not a response to government cut-backs.

"We don't need the number of beds we needed [previously]," Fuks stated simply.

MCGILL'S PLAN GETS ROCHON'S BLESSING

With seven hospitals scheduled to close and further cut-backs on the way, the debate on ambulatory care is becoming increasingly irrelevant.

In fact, these days administrators and hospital workers alike seem eager to consolidate services, if only to beat the government to it.

"I personally feel that the hospitals collaborating in their administration and their services is the way to go, because for

the survival of these establishments, they will have to do more with less," said David Citrome, president of the Association des employés en service social de la province du Québec.

While Fuks insisted that "The MUHC is not a plan to close hospitals, he admitted that "the proposed amalgamation may look enough like a plan for closures to win the government's favour.

"They [the Parti Québécois] are very anxious to see us succeeding," agreed Gerard Douville, executive director of the MUHC.

When Provincial Health

Minister Jean Rochon announced his intent last year to recognise only five teaching hospitals, institutions in Sherbrooke, Québec City and Montréal began to move toward common administration — if not a common physical structure as in the MUHC plan.

"The philosophy of the minister is to reduce the number of hospitals in order to concentrate the resources," Douville explained.

Towards this end, Université de Montréal's teaching hospitals — Notre Dame, Hôtel Dieu and St. Luc — are also moving toward common governance.

But Gail Campbell, the representative of unionised staff members to the MUHC's Interim Board, expressed concern about how many jobs may be eliminated in the process — from physicians to the administrators of the once independent hospitals.

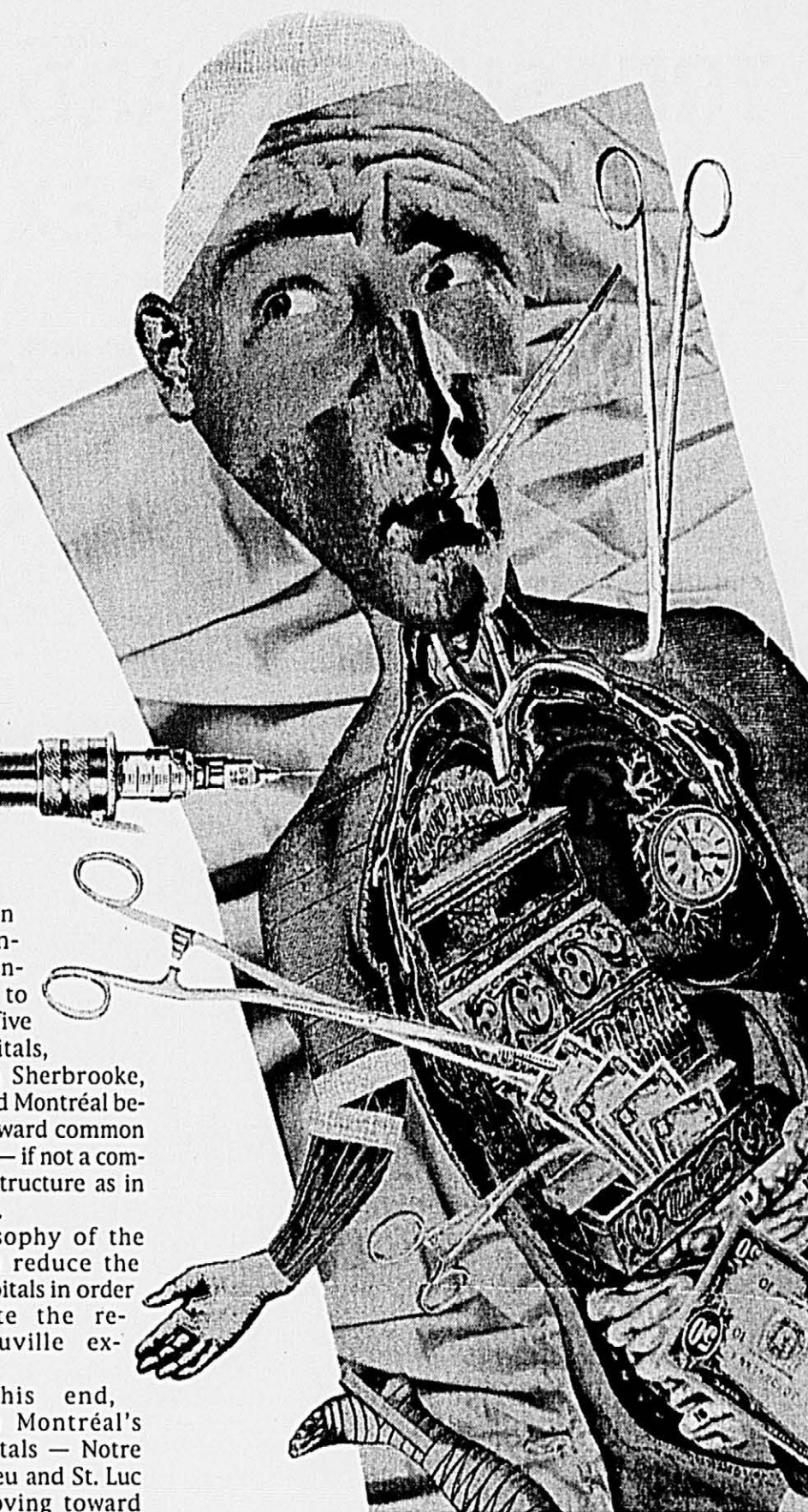
"I think what's more unsettling is the unknown, the hospital closures, the merger of staffs..." she said.

"If that's how we [unionised employees] are feeling, you can imagine how the medical community is feeling," Campbell added, pointing out that physicians may have the most to lose, since most other hospital employees have job security.

THE ALLIANCE QUEBEC CONNECTION

Richard Silver, director of health and social services at Alliance Québec, an anglophone-rights lobby group, admitted that any attempt to "try to fuse institutions" is "pretty consistent with the provincial [plan]."

"I think the provincial government is quite supportive of the notion, really," said Silver. The McGill Daily



Silver went on to state that the Rochon plan to close hospitals "reinforces the McGill plan to some extent."

This puts McGill in the awkward situation of appearing to benefit from the closings of other anglophone hospitals.

If so, the MUHC may be sowing the seeds of division among the anglophone health care community. But all may be forgotten if it can convince that community that the MUHC is their last, best chance at preserving anglophone health care in Montreal.

As Silver noted, "All Alliance Québec wants is just to make sure that we can get the services we need."

Although its support for the project is still unofficial for the time being, AQ seems to think that the MUHC is a service it needs.

Several heavyweights from the organisation have been involved with the MUHC: Alex Paterson, a founder of AQ in 1982, was the chairman of the MUHC steering committee whose 1994 report helped put the project on track; Eric Maldoff, another AQ founder, also served on the steering

committee; and Gail Campbell, president of AQ's Montreal chapter, is representing unionised hospital employees on the MUHC's Interim Board.

While a successful MUHC could help revitalise the organisation's image, no one at AQ has given the project an official endorsement at this point, nor is AQ lobbying the government on behalf of the MUHC, said Silver.

But with Maldoff, Paterson and Campbell involved, it would be hard to imagine the organisation coming out against the MUHC.

Silver insisted that "AQ generally gave general support to the proposal," but that official support would wait "until we really see the end result."

That end result — three fewer hospitals and a 35-acre super hospital due sometime in the next millennium — could change the face of Montréal health care irrevocably.

As Montreal lawyer and McGill professor Julius Grey warns, "What I think we have to beware of is the closing of institutions. Institutions occasionally have to die, but not often and not easily."

Monday, February 26, 1996

in The McGill Daily

TREASURY BOARD OF CANADA GRANTS SAME-SEX BENEFITS... ...SORT OF

By Dia Richardson

In November 1995, the Treasury Board of Canada and some major public service unions passed a Memorandum of Understanding which granted some same-sex partner benefits to the union members.

While some people would consider this a progressive move for the Canadian government, the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) says the agreement doesn't go far enough.

In fact, PSAC refused to sign the memorandum on the grounds that, whatever its intent, it constituted continued direct discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Under the agreement, union members in same-sex spousal relationships would only be entitled to a portion of the benefits granted to heterosexuals in common-law or marriage arrangements. Furthermore, the lesser package would be granted on the recognition of a "partner" rather than a "spousal" relationship.

Kay Sinclair, co-president of the PSAC Surrey Tax Centre Local and a member of the PSAC Lesbian and Gay Support Group, said queer union members will not settle for fewer rights than their straight colleagues.

"We will continue to be activists by having affected members file grievances to obtain rights under the collective agreement. There have been recent wins at adjudication," she said.

Sinclair added that for PSAC the current debate over benefits raises the issue of women's rights as well.

"There has been a close tie in with the women's movement since the 1980s as PSAC has a high composition of woman employees. At the last National Women's Conference lesbians



were recognised as a special interest group along with women of colour and disabilities."

For months before the Treasury Board signed the memorandum, PSAC says they tried to communicate with staff there.

PSAC proposed an alternative understanding that would guarantee spousal benefits without regard to sexual orientation, for all applicable collective agreement items as well as for the Public Service Health Care Plan.

While this could have been accomplished with the elimination of the phrase "of the opposite sex" from all existing mentions of "spouse," the Treasury Board's memorandum passed without the changes — and without PSAC's endorsement.

Victories amid set-backs

This is not the first time that the government has been challenged on the definition of a spouse, and not just by their own employees.

For years homosexual groups and individuals have been fighting the government to fight discrimination and obtain benefits under the Human Rights Act.

It has been almost 25 years since the first gay political action on Parliament Hill, when 100 lesbians and gays marched through Ottawa.

In recent years, more and more homosexuals have added their voices to the fight for equal rights — and the victories are slowly trickling in.

Just last month, the federal govern-

ment announced that it would pay compensation to queer employees who had been denied leave to handle partner-related responsibilities.

They were promptly attacked by members of the Reform Party displeased with the decision to pay \$500 in "moral prejudice" compensation to employees who had complained to the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

Edmonton Reform MP Ian McClelland accused the government of trying to sneak in legal recognition of same-sex couples against the will of Canadians and their Parliament.

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Language depart- ments to merge

(cont'd from front page)

Predelli and the other language department heads met recently with Dean of Arts Carman Miller to discuss the plan. She came away from the meeting very concerned about the future of language programs at McGill.

"It's a mess, it's just a mess," she said.

Miller announced at the meeting that "enormous amounts of money" will be cut from the departments, Predelli said.

The proposed changes include "serious measures that to our ears appear catastrophic and unreal," she continued.

While Predelli emphasized that the situation is "very fluid," she said it is hard to tell what the end result will be. But there is no doubt that

changes are coming.

FOCUS OF LANGUAGE COURSES THREATENED

Since they have no choice, the departments "will try to share [responsibilities and resources] in an equitable fashion," Predelli said.

But the most important issue, she said, is one which has not even been discussed: the effect of the merger on the content of McGill's language programs.

In addition to merging the language instruction departments, the plan was conceived with the goal of attracting greater participation from outside the university community.

While shifting the focus towards business people, and others from the larger Montreal community, could help bring in extra revenues for the programs, it might also fundamentally change the nature of language instruction at McGill.

"Clearly a concern for all the foreign language departments is linking literature and culture to the teaching of language. We have no assurance that this focus will be kept," said

Predelli.

Herman echoed Predelli's worries about possible threats to the cultural content of language courses, and emphasised the differences between language courses within academic programs and those in Continuing Education.

"We are learning languages for academic purposes, we need to be able to read academic texts. The needs of students in Continuing Education are different," Herman stated.

Credits and costs are also an issue. Shapiro's "New McGill" suggested that tuition fees would increase significantly in certain departments.

"Continuing Ed is really expensive," Herman said. "We're concerned that [the administration] might consider raising prices for language courses."

"We don't want the languages to be removed from the academic setting, and we want the credits, price and content to be equivalent to the current programs," she said.

In a memo sent to Professor de Takacs, Arts Undergraduate's Society VP-Academic John Provart outlined that organisation's stand on the pro-

spective changes.

Like Herman, he pointed out that students at McGill have been generally pleased with the quality of language instruction here, and he questioned the "over-emphasis of the importance of a unified language lab."

According to the AUS memo, "The number one motivating factor in learning a language is its application in cultural and literary milieus." To attempt improvements to grammatical instruction while neglecting the literary and cultural components would be "disastrous," it adds.

As well, the McGill language departments are staffed by faculty with a diverse and important range of backgrounds and research interests. Keeping these highly qualified teachers is a vital concern to students, Herman pointed out.

"If they change the nature of the courses to make them more equal to Continuing Ed, and to cut costs, [the administration is] not going to want such highly qualified teachers," Herman said. "That's obviously a concern."

Students angered by editorial

EDITOR MAINTAINS SHE DID NO WRONG

by Kathleen Frederickson

What do you do when your newspaper offends you, or fails to represent some student views?

The problem has become alarmingly clear to the students at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax. On January 30, a group of eight or nine students rounded up all copies of their student newspaper *The Picaro* and returned them to the paper's editorial office.

"We have returned your papers in protest," they declared in a written statement to the *Picaro* staff. The group, which included Mount Saint Vincent's Student Union president Joe Stoltz, were reacting to what they considered to be sexist and homophobic material in *The Picaro*'s January 29 issue.

The staff of *The Picaro* feel differently: the day after the papers landed back in their office, *Picaro* staff went out and redistributed the papers by hand.

Editor Andrea Bannister feels that the issue is one of censorship, and blames the protest on a small group of individuals.

"A small group decided that no one else should read the paper because of these three articles. But there are 30 more articles in the paper. They had no right to deprive the students of the right to read all the articles and make up their own minds — then come back and tell us how they feel."

But the group contends that Bannister's editorial was "homophobic and anti-feminist/woman" and unfit for publication. The editorial discussed perceptions that Mount Saint Vincent students are feminists and lesbians because of the low male/

female ratio.

In her editorial, Bannister asked, "Why is the Mount automatically pegholed and cat-

demand of Bannister, "What is wrong with being identified as a lesbian if you go to the Mount? Why should that raise indignation in you?"

What Bannister doesn't seem to realise is that lumping feminism, lesbianism and "hating men" into one category is an irresponsible leap of logic.

Moreover Bannister implies that there is something inherently undesirable about radical feminism and homosexuality.

"I'm sure you've all heard that the Mount is a hotbed of radical feminists," reads Bannister's editorial. "Well, they are not in my classes. If you mean there are people who believe that women are equal to men, sure, I'd say everyone in my classes fits that

bill. But the term 'radical feminists' doesn't apply to the fairly conservative views at the Mount." Bannister then goes on to explain that women at the Mount are not "being taught to hate men."

"Nothing we printed was homophobic or sexist or we wouldn't have printed it," the

paper." She feels that to focus the paper in a specifically feminist manner would be to ignore the school's 16 per cent male population.

Bannister is assuming, however, that feminist issues are irrelevant to the student body at large, and some students argue that in doing so she falls into the trap of marginalising women's issues.

According to Bannister, the sentiment against the articles was limited to a very small percentage of Mount Saint Vincent's 3400 students. "By far the majority of the people at the Mount didn't see anything wrong with the articles," she reflected, adding that *The Picaro* has received 16 or 17 letters of support from members of the student community.

Bannister also believes that the entire situation could have been avoided if there were avenues in place to deal with issues concerning the production of the paper. At the moment, *The Picaro* has no Publications' Society and thus students have no organisation through which their opinions can be voiced.

While both *The Picaro* and Mount Saint Vincent's Student Union have been working to set up a Publications' Society for more than a year now, Bannister believes that the recent dispute will help to precipitate the process.

Certainly, the entire experience has had the effect of drawing attention to the paper. The contentious issue was the most widely-read issue

that *The Picaro* has produced this year, and Bannister views the increased awareness as positive.

"A newspaper is supposed to be thought-provoking and challenging." One must then wonder why Bannister's editorial fails to present any alternatives to the status quo.



The Picaro

Mount Saint Vincent University

school just be a group of women going to school?"

The students who returned the papers said such an attitude is intolerable. In their statement to *The Picaro*, they

editor maintains.

Bannister attributes the accusations to a perception that "because the school is 84 per cent women *The Picaro* should almost be a feminist

posed to be thought-provoking and challenging." One must then wonder why Bannister's editorial fails to present any alternatives to the status quo.

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He cited a vote in held last September in the House of Commons that went 124-52 against a motion to legally recognise such relationships.

McClelland may have been happier with the verdict in the case of Egan v. Canada 95, in which James Egan fought unsuccessfully to obtain spousal benefits under the Canada Pension Plan Act.

After eight years, a variety of courthouses, multiple decisions and a final split court, the Supreme Court finally reached its decision last May to deny spousal benefits to James Egan and his partner of over 50 years.

Insisted McClelland, "Canadians, however tolerant, do not want the government of Canada to officially recognize same-sex partnerships as being the equivalent to marriage."

The members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada might disagree.

WHO WILL LOSE THE MOST?

The AUS does have a few suggestions for improvements to the language programs at McGill.

For one thing, it recommends that all McGill students be given a greater opportunity to broaden their educational base with more introductory and elective course offerings.

But such a prospect seems unlikely given the driving motives of cutting costs and attracting business people and other non-students to the Language Centre.

In fact, it would seem to require an expansion of existing programs, rather than the cost-cutting and amalgamation now underway — despite the fact that both students and faculty in the language programs say literary and culturally-focused courses are vital.

NUKES FOR SALE

Canadian exports helped French tests

by Chris Scott

The load starts out somewhere in northern Saskatchewan. Bundled onto trucks later used to haul groceries to native communities, it speeds over bleak roads on a 12-hour trek south to Saskatoon. From there, it is carried by rail, then again by road, purified, inventoried, and mixed into a gas.

By the time it enters Montréal, the uranium hexafluoride is more dangerous in bulk than any compound found in nature. A single collision on the way to the downtown Port could produce an explosion and a low-level toxic cloud over more than 2.5 square kilometers.

Four weeks after France announced an end to its much-hated nuclear test policy in the South Pacific, it is just beginning to be discussed how extensively Canada's uranium exports aided the programme.

And with a group of university activists vowing to blockade any further shipments through the Port, the issue is bound to remain explosive for some time.

As the world's foremost producer of uranium (roughly 30 per cent of world markets) exporting to a country whose domestic mines yield less than 15 per cent of its own supply, Canada is inevitably considered a vast resource by France. In fact, it is COGEMA (Compagnie Générale des Matières Nucléaires), a company 90 per cent owned by the French Atomic Energy Commission, that now controls half of all Saskatchewan's uranium operations. (Saskatchewan, in turn, contains the large majority of active uranium mines in Canada.)

But it is the distinction between "civilian" (i.e. nuclear reactor) and military uses of the material, in France and other host countries, that remains the source of a growing controversy between government and activists.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Ariel deLouya insists that all controls are in place to uphold Canada's post-1965 policy of exporting for peaceful purposes only.

"Any time Canada wants to export a good, be it a dangerous or controlled good, it has to be approved by the Minister of Foreign Affairs," deLouya said in a recent interview.

There is a second agency, the federal Atomic Energy Control Board (AECB) which in the case of uranium "must also issue a license," deLouya added.

Yet a 1995 Greenpeace re-

port titled *The French Connection* highlights such practices as "swapping", by which France, with Canada's approval, can re-direct Canadian uranium in its "civilian" plant to other uses if an amount equivalent to Canada's export is later accounted for in the civilian supply. Since France has a similar (but independent) agreement with almost every country it imports from,

"Overall, there is a uranium truck entering Montreal anywhere from once a month to once a week,"
— Steve Shalhorn

it could theoretically be using the same uranium to convince each country that its supply was being used for peaceful purposes.

The French Connection also mentions the large fraction (around 80 per cent) of radioactive material "discarded" as low-grade before it even reaches the reactor-material which could nevertheless be quite useful in atom bombs.

Considerations like this have led to a 1993 finding by a joint panel of the Canadian federal and Saskatchewan governments that "no proven method exists for preventing the incorporation of Canadian uranium into weapons."

Nevertheless, political rhetoric and profiteering seem to far outstrip any commit-

ment to world peace. "Because wars begin in the minds of men," argued Saskatchewan Premier Roy Romanow in a recent letter, "people ought to create the political will for world disarmament. The withholding of the uranium of Saskatchewan from world markets is an action which for all practical purposes is irrelevant."

In fact, as stated above, Saskatchewan is the world's foremost uranium producer. According to the federally-sponsored *Nuclear Canada Yearbook*, annual national profits from the sale of uranium stand at about \$1 billion.

To those who paid attention to French President Chirac's description of the "active and determined role for world disarmament" his country would play in immediate future, it might seem plausible that with the test programme over, COGEMA would begin pulling out of Saskatchewan.

But instead, says Phillip Prenna of the Saskatoon-based Inter-church Uranium Committee, COGEMA is expanding. COGEMA has bought out Midwest Joint Venture and applied for permits in new areas, explained Prenna in an interview with QPIRG Concordia this month.

Such moves raise fears that while focus in international media has been on nuclear weapons testing, there is no accord preventing France, or any other state, from stockpiling uranium to use in untested bombs.

In fact, the Chirac government has often remarked that the Pacific tests were necessary to allow it to continue performing simulated tests on computers, thus indicating that France has hardly abandoned thoughts of a nuclear arsenal.

While the spotlight has been on France, members of the Montréal NUCLEUS group, which is planning the blockade, stress that exports to other countries can also be risky.

Small amounts of Canadian uranium go to the United Kingdom, while a third nuclear power, the United States, takes nearly 50 per cent of our yearly exports.

Canada exported a total of 9 530 tonnes of uranium in 1994, of which 766 were sent to France.

Greenpeace Canada campaigns co-ordinator Steve Shalhorn is outraged, claiming that not only domestic, but also Australian uranium reaches France through Canadian ports.

The raw product, known as

"There is no such thing as a defensive nuke. A nuke has one purpose: to kill" — Judith Marshall

yellowcake, arrives via Europe through the Port of Montréal, from which it is transferred to one or possibly two Ontario refineries: at Blind River (on the North shore of Georgian Bay) and Port Hope (100 km east of Toronto).

These are the same stops the Saskatchewan material traverses, and it is at Port Hope that the uranium hexafluoride is produced, Shalhorn says.

Both Australian and Canadian vintage are trucked back into the Port of Montréal in gas canisters, then loaded by crane onto regular cargo vessels (probably also carrying other merchandise) for trans-

a minor, or even a massive accident. The nuclear complex is the only industry in Canada to be granted such immunity.

While the power of an international, multi-billion dollar industry can seem overwhelming, citizens' groups elsewhere have succeeded in bringing the nuclear supply lines to a halt.

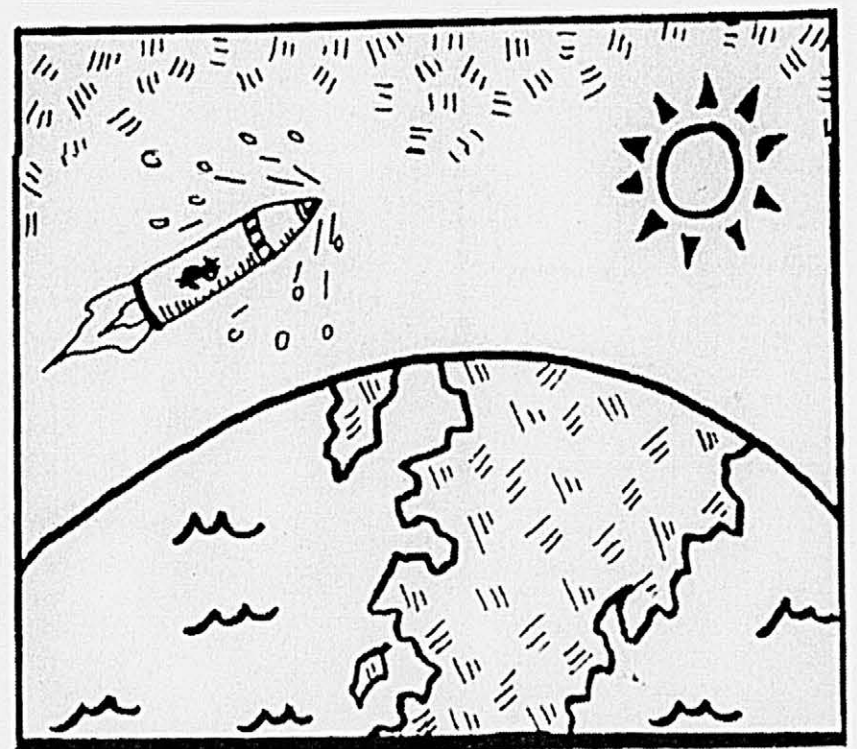
For example, there is currently no uranium mining in British Columbia, despite proven reserves, due to intense public pressure in that province.

And a non-violent Greenpeace lockdown last August paralyzed the Port Hope refinery for several hours.

The upcoming blockade will be very much like the Greenpeace one in nature, states PIRG Concordia co-ordinator Judith Marshall, who has worked closely with NUCLEUS members.

Marshall has nothing but scorn for Chirac's recent statements, and dismisses his theory of nuclear weapons as a deterrent.

"There is no such thing as a defensive nuke. A nuke has one purpose: to kill," Marshall



sit. Overall, there is a uranium truck entering Montreal anywhere from once a month to once a week, stated Shalhorn, indicating that circumstances of the transport raise critical safety concerns, including the possibility of a leak.

But nuclear suppliers would bear no responsibility for such an event. A piece of Canadian legislation, the *Nuclear Liability Act*, exempts suppliers from any requirement to pay compensation in the event of

said.

The first blockade will likely take place within the next two months, and is hoped to trigger a chain reaction of blockades along the entire supply route, confides Marshall.

"While pretending to be a peace leader, Canada is actually sabotaging the international peace process. It's time for citizens to stand up for what their governments claim to believe in," Marshall explained.

NOT THE CHOICE OF THIS GENERATION

Students push for referendum on Pepsi contract

By Roberta Laucke

A referendum will be held this March asking students if they want the Student Society of McGill University to "cease doing business with any corporation having investments in Burma."

This question comes in the wake of Council's vote last summer to make Pepsi the main distributor on campus even though they knew about Pepsi's long history of investment in Burma.

Without informing all members of council, other student groups or consulting the student body, members of SSMU signed the contract with Pepsi.

"This summer SSMU drafted the contract with representatives from Pepsi and they did not do it legally," said campaign coordinator Simone Levine. "They did not invite the full members of the financial PCOC (Portfolio Committee of Council).

Half the people that were supposed to be there weren't. Representatives from other groups weren't invited," says Levine.

Chris Carter, coordinator of the referendum and member of the SSMU agreed, stating that proper procedures were not followed; "Nothing was ever mentioned about the contract to the financial portfolio committee of council. Lots of

students raised concerns and weren't invited to speak. This was unilaterally done by a couple of people."

One of the people involved in the proceedings was Kelly Remail, VP of Finance on SSMU. Remail refused to comment.

The referendum seeks to address the worsening climate of political oppression being carried out in Burma by the ruling military junta. In 1988, an elite group of army officers — the State Law and Order Restoration Council — crushed a budding democracy movement led by students and Buddhist monks.

They also imprisoned the leader of the democracy movement, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who later won the Nobel Peace Prize for her non-violent

opposition to the army regime. Daw Suu was released last summer after six years in house arrest.

The rule of the Slorc has been marked by widespread political repression and a bloody crackdown on ethnic minorities.

an upcountry airport.

Life under the Slorc has meant widespread misery for most of the population. All civil liberties have been suspended, and little has been done to relieve the grinding poverty of the population.

"In Burma, torture follows arrest as night follows day," stated the last Amnesty International report.

"People are being killed" says Levine. "The Student's Society is legitimising what's going on. We realise people are being killed and that is more important than drinking Pepsi."

While other companies such as Levi Strauss, Eddie Bauer, Amoco, Liz Claiborne, Macy's and Petro Canada have already cut their ties with Burma, McGill continues to indicate to thousands of stu-

dents across the country that they are supporters of slave labour.

"It's an ethical and moral question," said Carter. "We can't deny the fact that people are being killed and raped. Students in Burma are similar to us and are getting killed. We should be doing everything to make sure their human rights are not violated," he said.

In case students vote to keep doing business with Pepsi, members of council have added on another question asking students if "they allow the Student Society to amend the constitution to include a process for the review of all contracts existing and proposed which we, as students, choose to do business with."

According to Carter this question will allow students to take control. "This question will give us the opportunity to add a committee called the financial ethics committee. Our mandate would be to overview the running of the student society. This would allow us to review different corporations on future issues that could be brought up and to ensure that this never happens again."

If you would like to take part in the referendum call the committee for social responsibility at 398-7432



Nobel Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

The military have made extensive use of the Burmese population as slave labour in infrastructure projects and in military campaigns. In last year's report, Amnesty International stated that over 100 000 people are being used to construct a runway for

Toe to Toe with Cambior

ACTIVISTS LAUNCH GUYANA LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

by Anup Grewal

Gathered around a long table, a coalition of environmental groups and other organisations launched a fight against a Montréal mining company's negligence in a Guyana operation on Tuesday, February 13.

Following the meeting, members of PIRA Communications, Toronto's Probe International, the Sierra Club and Greenpeace International announced the set up of a Legal Defense Fund to support the victims of the Omai mining disaster.

Last August, the Omai gold mine which is mostly owned by Montréal-based Cambior Incorporated, was the site of one of the largest cyanide and heavy metal-laced effluent spills in the region.

Following the spill, which adversely affected the livelihood of the many Guyanese fishermen and Amerindians living along the Omai and Essequibo rivers, the government commissioned an inquiry into the disaster.

The report, which was released in January, gave the go ahead to Cambior to re-open the mine. This was despite the company's failure to conduct an environmental audit of the disaster, find out why the disaster happened or mandate a proper clean-up.

While the government of Guyana seems to have washed its hands of the affair, the National Committee for the defense of the Omai, which was established by the National Amerindian

Council is not ready to let the issue rest.

Continuing to pressure the Guyanese government to make Cambior responsible for compensation to the people of the region and to clean up the spill, the National Committee has also commissioned further action against Cambior on the behalf of Canadians.

On Wednesday, February 14, the group of Canadian organisations announced their intention of taking Cambior to court in Québec.

"We are prepared to go toe to toe against Cambior," said Dermot Travis of PIRA Communications, which has been involved in the case since the spill occurred.

"[The Guyanese] need the support of Canadians to ensure that this great wrong is [righted], and the Québec court system is well placed to hear a lawsuit of this type," asserted James Hughes, a Montréal lawyer.

"We are asking that all the damages that have occurred and will continue to occur if the spill is not cleaned up, be cleared up," continued Hughes.

Cambior maintains that there are no longterm effects of cyanide on the environment and that in re-opening the mine it promises to take all the necessary precautions to ensure that no further disasters occur. However, members of the coalition are not prepared to accept the company's word, espe-

cially as Cambior was the only source providing data and measurements of the levels of cyanide in the rivers during the first few weeks following the disaster.

"This whole issue involves credibility and who you are going to believe," said Travis. He cites the promises Cambior first gave to the Guyanese government of using only the best state of the art environmental technology, in 1991 when the mine was first to be opened.

"Cambior said that it would go to every length to take care of the environment and will use state of the art technology, yet it was with this state of the art technology that two billion litres of cyanide effluent was leaked into the [Omai and Essequibo] rivers," condemned Travis.

"Guyana believed Cambior in 1991, why should it believe them now?" he asked.

The strategy of the coalition is to first send a letter of demand to Cambior asking it to settle out of court. The members are prepared to go to court if Cambior remains uncooperative — despite the possibility that legal fees may exceed \$50 000.

"We can't let Cambior set a precedent for large companies using countries' and the world's waterways as a huge septic tank," said Shelly Kath, former legislative director of the Sierra Club in New York state.

"We constantly hear companies saying, 'the liner won't leak, the pond won't break', and then two years down the road the liner leaks and the pond breaks. This is insulting to people and companies have to be made to realise that they are responsible for not using our public waterways as dumping grounds," continued Kath.

If the case against Cambior does hit the courts, a number of controversial issues would be brought to the public forum, including the Canadian government's complicity in the environmental disaster. In what amounts to a disturbing double standard, the Canadian government allows Canadian companies to disregard environmental and work safety regulations they would employ here, when they do business elsewhere.

The Canadian Export Development Corporation was responsible for providing Cambior with political risk insurance and the Canadian International Development Agency invested \$300 000 in work training programmes at the Omai mine.

Citing a passage from the Inquiry's report which said that a worker at the mine who tried to contain the spill was without gloves or protective gear, Travis said he finds the fact that Canadian governmental organisations were involved in Omai to be "incredible."

Seizing the power

UQAM conference on community-based energy efficiency

by mike cullen

Quebeckers everywhere are feeling the hydro bill crunch right around this time; heating expenditures are at a peak and people's pocket books are shallow.

In recognition of this annual event, L'Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) held its first Conference on Community Based Energy Efficiency this past weekend.

The three-day conference reviewed past and current community-based energy efficiency projects, and addressed concerns about their implementation at the community and individual levels.

According to guest speaker and editor-in-chief of the periodical *Ecodecision*, Claude Villeneuve, energy efficiency entails using the right source at the right place, and recuperating energy that has al-

ready been used.

Gordon Edwards, president of the Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility, points out that Hydro Québec and Ontario Hydro do not promote the most efficient usage of the electricity they produce and distribute.

Edwards asserts that both corporations vastly overestimated demand prior to the '80s, resulting in large surpluses of electricity which required more redundant facilities.

President for the public interest group Mouvement Vert Mauricie, Michel Fugère, explains that the consumption estimates were incorrect because they were based on exponential growth predictors. "[But] Québec hasn't experienced exponential growth in years," says Fugère.

Edwards points to the Gentilly II power station as an example of inefficiency. He says the facility is a costly liability, since it consumes 100 million dollars a year that could be more effectively used elsewhere.

"If Hydro Québec can spend 100 million dollars a year [on an inefficient plant]... surely Hydro Québec can afford to spend twenty million dollars for community based energy efficiency."

Corporations that supply power to the provinces for profit are inherently poor instruments for managing energy, Edwards adds.

"Leadership should be taken out of the hands of those who see energy as a supply and demand relationship," he says, adding that an efficient energy community cannot be built from the

top down.

Efficiency lies in the community

As energy payments presently stand, those who are least able to pay for energy-saving strategies are the ones penalized for being unable to reduce their hydro costs.

Students and low wage income earners often lack the means to implement energy-saving strategies due to their relatively high start-up costs.

Sidney Ribaux, a founding member of the Université de Montréal's Public Interest Research Group (PIRG), stresses the need for community-based efficiency programs to specifically service these groups. "If we are to include all of society, we need specially targeted projects."

Louise Roy, an active participant in recent environ-

mental consulting processes, maintained that there is hope for community-based energy efficiency programs.

She stresses the value of community mobilisation, urging people to be prepared to get involved in public and private consulting processes.

"It is important that you be able to demonstrate strength of cause [on a regular basis]," Roy says.

These may be some of the few recourses that communities and individuals maintain — in the absence of procedures to hold hydro corporations directly accountable for their energy policies and projects.

In this regard, conferences such as this one have the potential to play an increasing role in continually addressing issues of energy efficiency, and supporting grassroots projects.

MORE THAN 'ETHNIC' NEWS

REAL SCENE HITS THE STANDS NEXT MONTH

by Shuah Roskies

Next month Montréalers will find a new free magazine on the scene. Attempting to address a discrepancy in the portrayal of black popular culture in existing magazines in the city, *Real Scene*, the brain child of Chenier Belgrave and Lisa Phipps, will focus on the culture scene of the black community.

"Until now," says Belgrave, "no Montréal publication has actually depicted black popular culture accurately."

He points to prominent Montréal publications such as *The Mirror* and the *Gazette*, commenting that they tend to allocate the urban black scene to fringe status or ghettoise it as "ethnic" news.

It was this lack of recognition for the variety and importance of black music, movies and fashion which prompted the founding of *Real Scene*.

Phipps and Belgrave hope to cover aspects of popular culture including urban street wear, Hip-Hop, graffiti and book reviews.

Montréal's own thriving black popular culture will be, for *Real Scene*, the focus of the magazine's coverage and will target the 25 to 30 age group.

While *Real Scene*'s specific emphasis will be Montréal's black popular culture, it is not the first initiative of this kind. Many existing publications in the US and in Canada

have attempted the same thing.

New York city's *Vibe* is one example. *Vibe*, which was started several years ago by the popular Black American musician Quincy Jones, has goals similar to that of *Real Scene*, claiming to redress the marginalisation of Black contributions to popular culture.

Toronto's *Metro World* and *Diaspora*, are other Canadian examples which cover urban black popular culture.

And while *Real Scene* is the first popular culture magazine looking at Montréal's black community, it is not the first publication to attempt to look at issues concerning the Montréal black community.

Community Contact began its career in 1991 as a magazine looking at political, social and cultural events within the black community.

"We [the black community] hardly have any solid institutions to capture the agenda of the community," says Egbert Gay, current editor of *Community Contact*.

"There is an inherent system we basically have to fight against for everything we get."

Gay says that it is important for people to recognise issues surrounding such things as disproportionate high school drop out rates, unemployment of black youth, difficulties with the criminal justice system and the need to establish black enter-

prise in the city.

Gay believes there is a lack of access and a denial of opportunity for black youth which needs to be addressed.

Real Scene seems to echo these same concerns from popular culture angle in Montréal.

"The white media has given black musicians, artists and writers fringe status, yet their contributions have been too vast to limit them to this area," says Belgrave.

Real Scene, hopes Belgrave, will "foster integration by making [black popular culture] accessible to all."

Real Scene needs writers, both in French and English. For more information, call 932 2927

Community Contact is available at the Black Student Network.

EVENTS-EVENTS-EVENTS

Monday February 26

- The McGill Debating Union hosts its weekly Monday meeting and show debate starting promptly at 18h at 550 Sherbrooke Street, Room 1175.
- McGill's Tuesday Night Cafe Theatre presents the opening of "Counting the Ways" which runs until March 2 at Morrice Hall, 3485 McTavish Street. Tickets are \$7, \$5 for students. All shows begin at 20h30.

Tuesday February 27

- The McGill Department of History presents Dr. Esther Delisle speaking on "Totem and Taboo: Managing Memory in Québec". Thomson House, 3650 McTavish, 16h.

ONGOING

- Tel-Aide, a listening service for Montréalers in distress, needs volunteers. Contact 935-1105 for information.
- Elder Abuse Info-Line is recruiting bilingual volunteers to work on its provincial listening, information and referral line. Contact Elana Soldin 488-9163 for further information.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Ads may be placed through the Daily Business Office, Room B-07, University Centre, 9h00-14h00. Deadline is 14h00, two working days prior to publication. **McGill Students & Staff** (with valid ID): \$4.55 per day, 3 or more consecutive days, \$4.00 per day. **General Public**: \$5.70 per day, or \$4.85 per day for 3 or more consecutive days. Extra charges may apply, and prices do not include applicable GST (7%) or PST (6.5%). Full payment should accompany your advertising order and may be made in cash or by personal cheque (for amounts over \$20 only). For more information, please visit our office or call 398-6790. **WE CANNOT TAKE CLASSIFIED ADS OVER THE PHONE. PLEASE CHECK YOUR AD CAREFULLY WHEN IT APPEARS IN THE PAPER.** The Daily assumes no financial responsibility for errors, or damages due to errors. Ad will reappear free of charge upon request if information is incorrect due to our error. The Daily reserves the right not to print any classified ad.

1-HOUSING

I'll take over your apart./lease for May 1. Plateau/ghetto. Must be very quiet, clean, access to mountain. Open to a share. Denise 849-2657.

2-MOVERS/STORAGE

Moving/Storage. Closed van or truck local & long distance. Ott-Tor-Van-NY-Fla-7 days, 24 hours, low rates. Steve 735-8148.

3-HELP WANTED

Summer Business: Are you an entrepreneur? Great opportunity with low start-up cost, management training, earn up to \$800/week, vehicle required, call Greenland Irrigation 1-800-361-4074.

Female Models

Opportunities for all ages and sizes. Fashion, TV, print, film. 633-8605.

Children's camp in Laurentians requires registered nurse, nursing assistant, secretary, food service staff. Telephone 485-1135. Fax resume to 514-485-1124.

Children's camp in Laurentians requires counsellor, instructors for waterskiing, sailboarding, sailing, swimming, canoeing, tennis, baseball, rockclimbing, volleyball, soccer, arts&crafts, drama, music. Telephone 485-1135. Fax resume to 514-485-1124.

Organist/Choir Director wanted ASAP. Small west isl. parish has immed. opening for 11:00am Sun. Lit. Duties incl. music planning & direction of 2-3 part choir, rehearsals Wed. evenings 7:30-9:00 pm. Sun lit. & upcoming Holy Week celebrations. Salary neg. Please call 426-5648.

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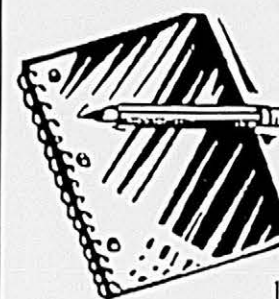


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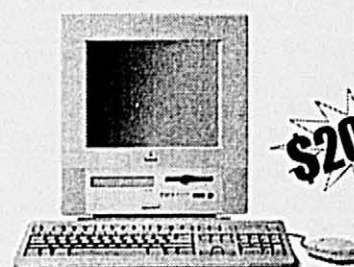
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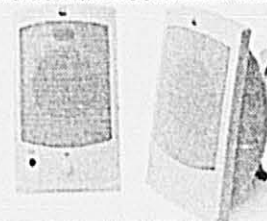
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